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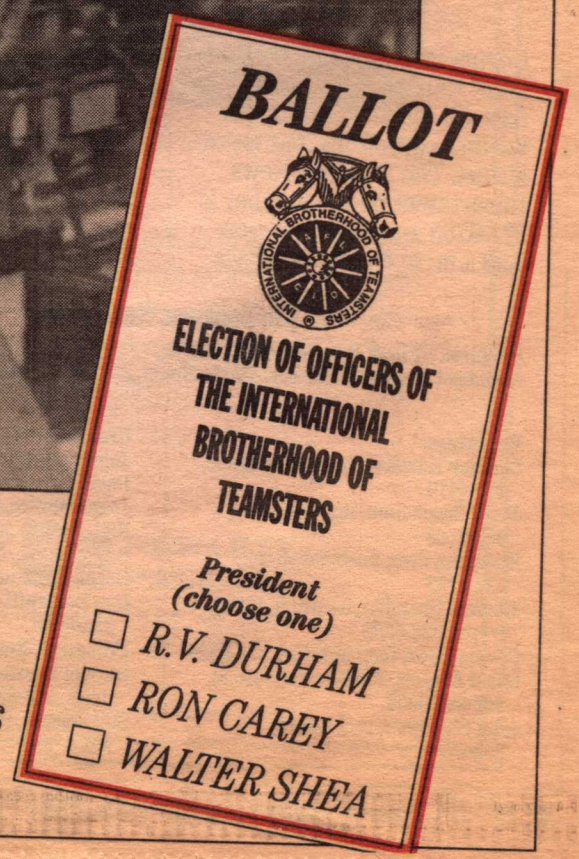
SECTION F

TEAMSTERS TRY DEMOCRACY

Rank-and-file members, for the first time ever, will elect top officers

COVER STORY/PAGE 8F



Rank-and-file vote to pick top Teamster

TEAMSTERS, from Page 9F

modestly in the Central states and the West Coast. Shea is expected to win the Eastern states. The South is rated a toss-up between Durham and Carey.

That's the conventional wisdom. But here's why it might be wrong:

■ Turnout. Shea predicts as few as 25 percent of Teamsters will vote, Durham about 30 percent, and Carey as much as 45 percent. If Carey is anywhere close to being right, he expects to win, since it means many workers are voting who've never before been active in Teamsters politics.

■ Campaigning. Last spring, Carey surprised everybody by capturing 15 percent of convention delegate spots. Nobody, not even Durham, knows how hard the local officials who've endorsed him are actually working. Chuck Nobles, a chief steward at Teamsters Local 337 in Detroit, says 70 percent of business agents in his local are aggressive and credible enough to convince workers to vote for Durham, their endorsed candidate.

■ Support. In a recent poll of 605 rank-and-file Teamsters in the United States and Canada, Carey was supported by 29 percent of those interviewed, Durham by 13 percent, and Shea by 7 percent. The poll, commissioned by Carey, was quickly dismissed by the Durham camp as inaccurate.

The election was mandated by a 1989 settlement of a racketeering lawsuit against Teamsters leaders. The government maintains a watchful eye.

Since 1989, 135 Teamsters have been removed, including 13 present or former executive board members. Of those removed, 51 were charged with joining or tolerating organized crime.

For the election itself, the government is printing ballots with special ink, on paper that's specially weighted and cut to a precise size. Each ballot and each envelope is marked with an individual computer code. Four hundred court officers will count the votes.

In terms of clarifying issues, the election has been only partially successful. The candidates couple vague promises of better pensions and contracts with harsh accusations that their opponents are crooks and scabs. They argue over who's the real reformer, who's a creature of the old guard, and who the workers ought to trust.

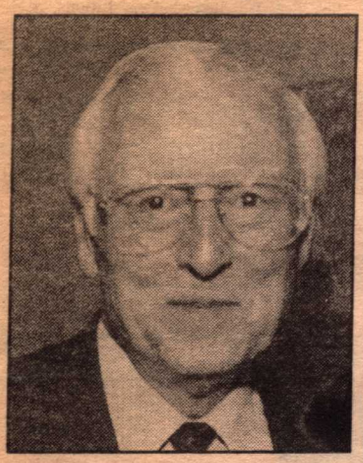
Still, Clyde Summers of the University of Pennsylvania Law School believes the election is a watershed in U.S. labor history.

"Nobody is running on the basis of continuing the old regime," Summers said. "The centralized control and corruption we've seen in the past will be a long time, if ever, in coming back."

One of the first tasks for the new officers will be a 1992 presidential endorsement.

After endorsing Ronald Reagan twice and George Bush once, top Teamsters now say if Bush vetoes legislation to ban the permanent replacement of strikers, he shouldn't bother asking.

Three veterans vie for Teamsters' top job



R.V. Durham

TITLE: International vice president; president of Local 391 in Greensboro, N.C.

AGE: 60

CAMPAIGN NOTES: The front-runner. Endorsed by incumbent President William McCarthy and most local officials. But insists he's as committed to reform as anyone. Gets credit for well-run local and spotless record on ethics.

QUOTE: "The union will never be the same, and thank God for that. I clearly expect to win. But I'm in my 31st year as an elected official, and I've never done anything but campaign hard as hell."

Ron Carey

TITLE: President of Local 804 in Long Island City, N.Y.

AGE: 55

CAMPAIGN NOTES: Don't rule out an upset. Supported by Detroit-based Teamsters for a Democratic Union and other reformers. Ran better than expected in delegate elections last spring and grew stronger over the summer.

QUOTE: "In the beginning, they looked at my campaign as a joke. They thought nobody could win without the blessing of the inner circle. But they're not laughing now."

Walter Shea

TITLE: International vice president and former executive assistant to four Teamsters presidents.

AGE: 61

CAMPAIGN NOTES: A long shot. Bristles at widespread belief he's the candidate of the old guard. Support mostly limited to New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

QUOTE: "The old guard has been shattered and destroyed, if there ever was such a thing. I'm trying to change the direction of this union. We've been too complacent, too aloof."

Six metro Detroit Teamsters share their thoughts and concerns about th

MIKE GARLAND

JOEL THURTELL/Detroit Free Press

JOB: For 18 years, a truck mechanic at Clawson Concrete Co. in Auburn Hills. Member of Teamsters Local 614.

PERSONAL: Age 46; lives in Orion Township with wife Linda; three children.

QUOTE: "This is a first-time deal for us to elect the international president, and I think it's right.

"I'd like to get more information on who's running, but nobody seems to know how to get it. Nobody has passed anything out where I work, and nothing has come in the mail. Our business agents haven't come around campaigning. They're stretched pretty thin.

"My partner is a Ron Carey advocate, and he's told me quite a bit. I might go ahead and vote for him, since *he's the only one I know anything* about.

"I feel if you've got a man who's secretary-treasurer of a local, and you put him on a committee at the international union, you should pay that man's expenses. But you shouldn't give him three paychecks and three pensions, the way they do now. Those guys should get a decent wage, but they shouldn't be rich. I'm not rich, and I'm paying their wages.

'I think 90 percent of the guys I work with will vote. I think R.V. Durham will probably win. A lot of your locals are from the old school. They're not going to want that much change."

WALTER LUNSFORD

JOB: For seven years, Ann Arbor deputy chief of police. A member of Teamsters Local 214.

PERSONAL: Age 46; lives in Ann Arbor with wife, Nancy; two daughters.

QUOTE: "I have no information on the campaign or the election. It's not that it hasn't been sent out. But my interest and affiliation is with the local union. That's who responds to our issues. That's where we go when we have a problem.

"Outside of that, we never concern ourselves with the broader, national issues.

"I receive the Teamsters magazine, which has information on the campaign. But I didn't read it. I'm not planning to vote.

"There are only three people in my unit. There's another Teamsters unit in the department with 32 people. I have not heard conversations which lead me to believe there is substantial interest in the election in either unit.

"I haven't been contacted by Joe Valenti (Local 214 president). But Joe is certainly credible enough that if he came to me personally, and said, 'Here are the issues, and I need your support for this candidate, then that's certainly how I would vote.'

"But without that, I'd rather not participate."

DAYMON J. HARTLEY/Detroit Free Press

PEGGY FARRELL

JOB: For 29 years, a flight attendant with Republic and now Northwest Airlines. A delegate to the Teamsters convention from Local 2757 and a leader of Flight Attendants for a Democratic Voice, a dissident group.

PERSONAL: Age 49; lives in Bloomfield Hills with husband, Rick.

QUOTE: "We have 8,500 Northwest flight attendants in our local in Detroit. I'd say 50 percent will vote, at least.

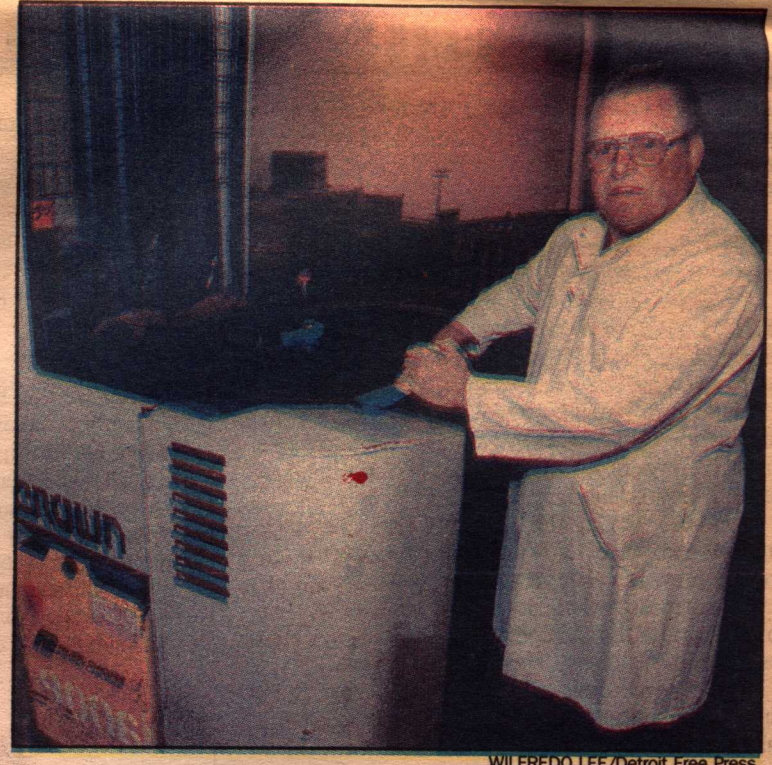
"There's always a certain amount of apathy. But I always tell people, 'if you've got a problem, don't sit around the crew room and bellyache. Do something about it.'

"Because the Teamsters are the largest union in the country, it's very important who becomes the next president as far as what happens to the rest of the labor movement.

"I'll be passing out a lot of Ron Carey literature in the next few days. I'll be working the phone banks every night.

"When I go over to Seoul or to Narita airport in Tokyo, I sit in the flight lounge and pass out fliers to the flight attendants coming through. That works real well.

"When I get on the bus at the airport, I tell the transportation people who to vote for. When they hear it coming from another worker, they tend to believe it."



WILFREDO LEE/Detroit Free Press

WILFREDO LEE/Detroit Free Press

JIM CAROTHERS

JOB: For 17 years, a car hauler for Commercial Carriers Inc., a division of Ryder Systems in Dearborn. A steward for Teamsters Local 299 and an activist in Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a dissident group.

PERSONAL: Age 47; lives in Redford with wife, Chris.

QUOTE: "The buzz word now is empowerment. Rank-and-file Teamsters have been totally disempowered for years and year and years. Now, suddenly, everybody is making comparisons, saying, 'If Eastern Europe is

STORY

e first direct election of top union officials

PAULINE LUBENS/Detroit Free Press

CHUCK NOBLES

JOB: An A&P warehouseman for 32 years, he's a forklift driver at the company's Burt Road produce terminal in Detroit. Chief steward for Teamsters Local 337.

PERSONAL: Age 56; lives in Dearborn Heights with wife, Eleanor; three children.

QUOTE: "I don't see any apathy in my barn. I think 95 percent of the guys will vote. It'll be more so the older group, guys that are worried about their pensions.

"Nationwide, I think 40 percent will vote. I think the majority will be for R.V. Durham. They feel he's honest, hardworking. He's the only one campaigning in the food service industry.

"I've been fighting the dissidents ever since they came into existence. I don't think their support is any stronger now. But they're smarter, more organized.

"I think most guys think the government did a fine job getting rid of the corruption. But now the guys want the government to say, 'Hey, let's stop.'

"The change in this union is coming slowly. But I think it's coming back to the people, so the people can make the majority of the decisions."

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democratic, why can't we be?'

"Things are really changing. With the democratic process in place, the new leaders will have credibility and legitimacy that the Teamsters leadership never had before. They will have shaken off the taint of corruption.

"But the sad truth is that there's still a great deal of cynicism and apathy out there. A good deal of people still don't know there's an election going on.

"That's not true of car-haul drivers. We have a history of probably being the most militant Teamsters in the union. The people in my place are very strongly in the Carey camp."

BRENDA REESE

JOB: Circulation office clerk for the Detroit Newspaper Agency. An alternate steward and organizer for Teamsters Local 372.

PERSONAL: Age 41; lives in Detroit; one son.

QUOTE: "Getting the government out of the union and ending the corruption will restore a lot of our bargaining power. It will let companies know that we mean business, that you cannot push people around and eliminate jobs and have it be OK. It will help us with public opinion.

"So far, the only literature I got was from R.V. Durham. He seems to be the one that Local 372 has the most faith in. So that's how I'll vote. . . .

"But I'm amazed there's no women at all on the slate. I'm wondering if one of the prerequisites of being an officer is being a truck driver first.

"People I work with are aware of the election, but they don't seem to be too excited about it. It's difficult to get excited about the international scene when the home is not real pleasant. Our negotiations are not far off. With the economy as bad as it is, you know the company will use that."

JOHN A. STANO/Detroit Free Press

RACE FOR THE TOP

Who rank-and-file Teamsters will elect is anybody's guess

BY JOHN LIPPERT
Free Press Labor Writer

It's a measure of how completely the Teamsters Union has been placed into the hands of rank-and-file workers that nobody is sure who its next president will be.

The conventional rules, if they apply, favor R.V. Durham, who has the most money and the most endorsements from Teamsters leaders in Washington and in local unions.

But nobody dismisses the possibility of an upset by Ron Carey, who's backed by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a Detroit-based dissident group.

Rank-and-file workers have never before voted for top Teamsters officers. Because of that, the union is now "like Neil Armstrong up on the moon, seeing if the flagpole will stick in the ground," says Eddie Burke, Carey's campaign manager.

Court-appointed elections officers began mailing ballots to 1.5 million Teamsters throughout North America last Friday. The ballots will be returned and counted by mid-December.

The outcome could have a profound effect on the the country's largest and most powerful union, one which touches every corner of the economy.

The Teamsters have been bouncing like a pinball between gangsters and federal investigators for 40 years. If the union can get its act together, labor experts say, it could negotiate better contracts, organize more workers, and be more effective politically.

Durham is regarded as the front-runner because he:

- Is endorsed by William McCarthy, the incumbent president who's not seeking re-election, and three-quarters of the 5,000 local union officials in the United States and Canada. That means Durham will get votes in virtually all of the 650 locals. In contrast, Carey is a factor in perhaps 200 locals nationwide, and underdog candidate Walter Shea's support is concentrated along the East Coast.
- Will spend more than $1 million on the contest, compared to $500,000 for Carey and $300,000 for Shea.
- Is expected to win big in Canada, and win more

See **TEAMSTERS**, Page **13F**

A look at the candidates, Page 13F

Teamsters' new day

Reformer in lead for president

By Desda Moss
USA TODAY

If anyone needed proof that a new day has dawned for the corruption-plagued Teamsters, it arrived this week as mail ballots were counted in the union's government-supervised presidential election.

Ron Carey — who was given little chance of winning the Teamsters' first-ever rank-and-file vote — claimed victory for his slate.

Carey, a reformer who ran a throw-the-bums-out campaign, said his election signals an end to union corruption.

"I want to welcome you to the new Teamsters," he told reporters Thursday. "Welcome to a union that has been won back by its members."

Carey, 55, head of a United Parcel Service local in New York City, held a lead considered insurmountable. Final results are expected Saturday.

He led Thursday with about 116,000 votes. Second place, R.V. Durham, had 79,000. About one-fourth of the union's 1.6 million members were expected to vote.

Durham, a moderate considered the front-runner, conceded the race.

Previous presidents, including Jimmy Hoffa, Roy Williams and Jackie Presser, were elevated to the top job by a small group of insiders.

The Teamsters had agreed to democratize their election rules to settle a racketeering lawsuit brought by the Justice Department in 1988.

The suit came in the wake of four indictments and three convictions of the union's last seven presidents.

Carey's apparent upset victory is a stunning success for the union's reform movement. "From the day I walk in the door, the rules are going to change," he declared. "We are going to clean house and never again apologize for being Teamsters."

Still, he'll have to work with a board that includes the old guard.

He pledged to work for better pensions and health care and to oust any Teamster caught breaking the law.

He also said he'd buck his union's traditional Republicanism and oppose President Bush's re-election.

In his campaign, Carey repeatedly pointed out that his $48,000 salary as a local president was less than the salary of a French chef at Teamsters headquarters in Washington.

His first decision as president-elect: He'll cut his presidential salary from $225,000 to $175,000.

Carey followed his father, also a UPS driver, when he joined UPS at 20 following a hitch in the Marines. In two years, he was a shop steward.

When he sought the presidency of UPS Local 804 in Long Island City, N.Y., in 1967, Carey says, his employer threatened him, but he taped the meeting and played it at campaign rallies. The tactic helped him win.

He'll replace retiring William McCarthy as early as January after results are certified.

By Ron Thomas, Reuters

NEW LEADERS: Ron Carey, right, claimed the Teamsters' presidency Thursday, while Diana Kilmury, won an at-large vice presidency.

Longtime female activist breaks down barriers

Another barrier broke when reformers took the lead in the Teamsters election: For the first time in the union's 88 years, a woman gained national office.

Diana Kilmury, 44, ran on the Ron Carey ticket for one of five at-large vice presidencies.

"It's wonderful," said the longtime activist, who drives a truck for the movie industry in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Kilmury says her presence will amplify the concerns of female members. "The working woman's point of view will be carried to the highest levels of the organization — issues like pay equity and on-site day care and other things that concern women in the workplace."

Women make up one-third of the Teamsters' membership.

Kilmury joined the Teamsters in 1974. In 1981, as a delegate to the Teamsters convention in Las Vegas, she won notoriety with an unpopular speech calling for an ethical practices committee to fight union corruption.

"You haven't lived until you've had 2,000 people screaming for your blood," she said later.

Although she chafed at government supervision of the union's revamped balloting, she said the democratic election increased the chance a woman could be elected to national office.

"I don't think there would have been a woman on the slate if we hadn't gone to a rank-and-file election."

— Desda Moss

THE BOSTON GLOBE • SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1991

A step for unionism

Dec. 14, 1991 Sat

STEVE EARLY

The winds of change sweeping through the International Brotherhood of Teamsters bode well for revitalization of the labor movement – locally and nationally.

The election of New York reformer Ron Carey as Teamsters president and Carey supporter George Cashman as head of the union's Boston local reflects growing rank-and-file concern about the decline of unionism generally.

Both candidates called for greater union democracy and membership empowerment to stem the steady loss of dues-payers, bargaining clout and political influence that has weakened the Teamsters as well as other unions.

If the grass-roots movements that elected Carey and Cashman succeed in overhauling Teamsters strategies and programs, the nation's largest blue-collar union may soon be a source of pride rather than embarrassment for the rest of organized labor. At the very least, the unprecedented referendum vote that made Carey president broke the back of the mob-influenced leadership – and a selection process that enabled a succession of felons to control the union for most of the last 40 years.

Like the former dissidents who've recently inherited the ruins of one-party rule in Eastern Europe, reformers taking power in the Teamsters face a daunting array of challenges. Membership has dropped more than 28 percent. Many basic union structures have atrophied at every level. Deregulation, corporate restructuring, and management resistance to Teamsters organizing have given employers the upper hand even in traditional bastions of Teamsters strength, such as trucking and warehousing.

To turn the tide, the new leadership can take a leaf from Teamsters for a Democratic Union, the 10,000-member national reform group that helped lay the groundwork for Carey's succesful challenge to the Teamsters old guard. In addition to exposing corruption and demanding a clean-up of Teamsters benefit funds and financial practices, the group actually went out and organized the rank and file to fight for better contracts and representation on the job.

In key Teamsters bargaining units, where top officials preferred to keep workers in the dark and union deals with employers behind closed doors, Teamsters for a Democratic Union activists have spent the last 15 years organizing informational meetings, rallies, petition drives and workplace activity aimed at resisting wage cuts and other concessions.

The organization's model of membership education and mobilization is no different than the union revitalization programs now being promoted, under official auspices, in some of the better AFL-CIO unions. But, for the first time in the Teamsters history, members who've often had to rely on the limited resources of a dissident group will soon be able to get advice, assistance and encouragement from their own national leadership and revamped headquarters or field staff.

Teamsters employers may not be the only ones who are in for a change as a result of the union's leadership shake-up. For most of the last 30 years, top Teamsters officials have also cozied up to Republican presidential candidates, as part of their personal strategy for staying out of the can.

President-elect Carey has pledged to end the union's self-defeating habit of backing politicians opposed to labor's state and federal political agendas. By cleansing and opening up the candidate-endorsement and funding process, the new leadership can give members an unprecedented opportunity to participate in politics in a positive way that serves the interests of Teamsters and all working people.

Just as it has long been out of the labor mainstream on presidential politics, the Teamsters union has rarely participated in labor-community coalitions of any type. More progressive unions realized years ago that they need allies in the civil rights, citizen action, environmental, consumer protection and feminist movements. But groups like this always shunned the Teamsters because of its notorious reputation – or were shunned by it because of the top leadership's conservatism. Now, friends of labor may find Teamsters representatives reaching out for help and offering it in return – to the benefit of their mutual concerns.

If the grass-roots movements that elected Carey and Cashman overhaul Teamsters strategies and programs, the nation's largest blue-collar union may soon be a source of pride.

Implementing the many new approaches that the union needs will not be easy. Only one-quarter of the entire Teamsters membership participated in this week's first-ever democratic vote for national officers and executive board members. Such a low turnout suggests that many workers have little connection to the union or belief in anyone's ability to change it. Restoring their faith in trade unionism and the membership participation that makes it strong will take an all-out effort at very level of the Teamsters organization.

If successful, the consolidation of Teamsters reform will make a big difference, not only in the lives of Teamsters members but for all American workers whose fortunes are tied to the future of organized labor.

Steve Early is a former organizer for the Professional Drivers Council, a union reform organization now part of Teamsters for a Democratic Union.